

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0105520		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	06/09/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	05/09/2007
<b>Decision Date:</b>	07/16/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	05/18/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	06/01/2015

### HOW THE IMR FINAL DETERMINATION WAS MADE

MAXIMUS Federal Services sent the complete case file to an expert reviewer. He/she has no affiliation with the employer, employee, providers or the claims administrator. He/she has been in active clinical practice for more than five years and is currently working at least 24 hours a week in active practice. The expert reviewer was selected based on his/her clinical experience, education, background, and expertise in the same or similar specialties that evaluate and/or treat the medical condition and disputed items/Service. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

The Expert Reviewer has the following credentials:

State(s) of Licensure: California

Certification(s)/Specialty: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, Pain Management, Occupational Medicine

### CLINICAL CASE SUMMARY

The expert reviewer developed the following clinical case summary based on a review of the case file, including all medical records:

The injured worker is a female, who sustained an industrial injury on 5/09/2007, as a result of cumulative trauma. The injured worker was diagnosed as having chronic myofascial sprain/strain of the cervical spine, degenerative disc disease of the cervical spine, status post spinal fusion, cervical radiculopathy, and bilateral wrist pain. Treatment to date has included diagnostics, carpal tunnel releases in 1999, C4 through C7 cervical fusion 8/2012, physical therapy, and medications. On 4/21/2015, the injured worker complained of neck pain radiating into the bilateral upper extremities, right greater than left, and pain radiating down to her left wrist and hand. Pain was rated 4-5 with medication use and 6/10 without. She was currently taking Norco and said her pain has increased, especially doing repetitive work. Physical exam noted decreased lordosis in the cervical spine, tenderness to palpation over the cervical spine and paraspinal muscles, with stiffness and spasm. There was radicular pain in the C5-6 and C6-7 distribution. Cervical range of motion was restricted in all directions. Exam of the wrists noted tenderness and painful range of motion. She was placed on total temporary disability for one week, due to pain flare-up. The treatment plan included physical therapy (2x3) to the cervical spine. On 5/13/2015, she continued to complain of neck pain with radicular symptoms. Pain was rated 4-5/10 with medication and 7-8/10 without. Her work status was permanent and stationary. The treatment plan included physical therapy x6 for the cervical spine, due to flare-up of pain, with instruction on a home exercise program.

## **IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES**

The Final Determination was based on decisions for the disputed items/services set forth below:

**Physical therapy 2xwk x 3 wks for the cervical spine:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical medicine, Physical medicine guidelines Page(s): 98-99.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical Medicine Page(s): 98, 99.

**Decision rationale:** MTUS 2009 recommends up to 10 sessions of physical therapy for myalgia. The patient experienced increased pain and has been scheduled with a spine surgeon. The accompanying request does not include any goals for therapy or any precautions. The patient has already exceeded MTUS 2009 for physical therapy and has been scheduled for evaluation with a spine surgeon. Presumably, there are concerns that she may require surgery if she is referred to a spine surgeon. Therefore, additional physical therapy is not medically necessary since the patient has already received therapy in the past and will be evaluated by a surgeon.